

The Word



Winter 2024 –2025

Lowcountry Chapter, Beaufort, South Carolina

President's Message



Remember our MOAA motto:

NEVER STOP SERVING!

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USPHS
Colors

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Peace and Grace,
Padre





Keep Focus on Military Housing

Why it matters: Thousands of servicemembers live in substandard barracks plagued by mold, pests, sewage overflows, and broken safety systems. Despite recent legislative action, a \$137 billion backlog in deferred maintenance persists, and servicemembers continue to face unsafe and unacceptable conditions. Transparency is essential for accountability and sustaining efforts to improve unaccompanied housing.

Key facts:

Many barracks fail to meet DoD standards for privacy, space, and quality, with health and safety risks

reported across installations.

DoD lacks reliable assessments and funding transparency for unaccompanied housing (UH), hindering oversight and improvements. Pest infestations, mold, and sewage issues often leave servicemembers responsible for their own pest control and hazardous material removal, according to the Government Accountability Office.

“No servicemember should live in barracks plagued by mold, pests, or broken systems,” said Cory Titus, MOAA’s director of Government Relations for currently serving af-

fairs. “These conditions undermine the well-being and dignity of those who serve. Improving unaccompanied housing must remain a priority to ensure servicemembers have safe and healthy places to live,” said Titus, a former Army captain.

The ask: MOAA urges Congress to require DoD to:

- Provide transparency on funding for barracks maintenance and improvements.
- Empower lawmakers to identify and address UH challenges in their districts and states.

Editor’s Comments re barracks:

It’s hard for me to sympathize or visualize the forgoing, described plight of troops living in these motel-like quarters. During the early 50’s I had the dubious honor of residing in a number of open, squad-bay, style barracks; I don’t recall of ever having to deal with roaches, rats, mold, clogged plumbing or any other health and comfort issues.

We were required to righteously field-day those barracks every Thursday evening after the normal work day. If the barracks didn’t pass a “white glove” inspection on Friday morning, weekend liberty was a doubtful happening. Those creepy, crawly critters never got a chance to establish residency in our barracks, (bringing food-stuffs into our sleeping quarters was highly frowned upon).

Furthermore, living in those barracks wasn’t that bad. Once you were wearing two or three chevrons on your sleeves you were able to arrange the many wall lockers in such a way as to create a little nest of privacy for yourself.

*By Ian Kayanja
WCIV, Charleston, SC*

WASHINGTON, D.C. (WCIV) — Keeping Parris Island open remains a primary objective for Rep. Nancy Mace and U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham.

The two reintroduced the legislation in their respective chambers. The bill aims to prohibit federal funds from closing or realigning the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, ensuring it stays open and continuing training around 19,000 Marine Corps recruits each year. “This bill is about putting South Carolina first, standing up for our military, and ensuring the Lowcountry continues to lead in making Marines for generations to come,” said Mace, a Republican representing South Carolina’s 1st Congressional District. “We are committed to keeping South Carolina at the forefront of military excellence and protecting the Parris Island legacy.”

Parris Island is one of the oldest posts in the Marine Corps and was designated for recruit training in 1915. South Carolina lawmakers introduced Similar legislation in 2020, 2021, and 2023. In the past, lawmakers have pushed to keep it open amid reports of rising sea levels threatening the future of the Marine Corps’ eastern recruiting hub.



Cost of US military offensive against Houthis nears \$1 billion with limited impact

Story by Natasha Bertrand, CNN
April 5, 2025

The total cost of the US military's operation against the Iran-backed Houthi militants in Yemen is nearing \$1 billion in just under three weeks, even as the attacks have had limited impact on destroying the terror group's capabilities, three people briefed on the campaign's progress told CNN.

The military offensive, which was launched on March 15, has already used hundreds of millions of dollars worth of munitions for strikes against the group, including JASSM long-range cruise missiles, JSOWs, which are GPS-guided glide bombs, and Tomahawk missiles, the sources said. B-2 bombers out of Diego Garcia are also being used against the Houthis, and an additional aircraft carrier as well as several fighter squadrons and air defense systems will soon be moved into the Central Command region, defense officials said this week.

One of the sources said the Pentagon will likely need to request supplemental funding from Congress to continue the operation, but may not receive it — the offensive has already been criticized on both sides of the aisle, and even Vice President JD Vance said he thought the operation was “a mistake” in a Signal chat published by The Atlantic last week.

The Pentagon has not publicly disclosed what impact the daily US military strikes have actually had on the Houthis. Officials from the Pentagon's Joint Staff, US Central Command, US Indo Pacific Command, Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, and the State Department told Congress in recent days that the strikes have eliminated several members of Houthi leadership and destroyed some Houthi military sites.

But they acknowledged that the group has still been able to fortify their bunkers and maintain weapons stockpiles underground, much as they did during the strikes that the Biden administration carried out for over a year, the sources said.

And it has been difficult to determine precisely how much the Houthis still have stockpiled, a defense official said.

“They’ve taken out some sites, but that hasn’t affected the Houthis’ ability to continue shooting at ships in the Red Sea or shooting down US drones,” said one of the sources briefed on the operation. “Meanwhile, we are burning through readiness—munitions, fuel, deployment time.”

The operational tempo of the strikes is also higher now that CENTCOM Commander Erik Kurilla no longer needs higher-level approval to conduct strikes—a shift from the Biden administration and a return to the policies of Trump's first term, when military commanders were given more freedom to carry out missions in order to achieve “a strategic effect” as opposed to needing case-by-case approval from the White House for each strike and raid. It's still not clear, though, how long the Trump administration plans to continue the offensive, which CENTCOM has described as a “24/7” operation. Trump has said it will last until the Houthis stop attacking Red Sea shipping, but despite weeks of bombing the Houthis have continued launching missiles and drones at targets in and over the Red Sea. Earlier this week, they shot down another US MQ-9 Reaper drone—the second MQ-9 shot down since the offensive began last month, multiple sources told CNN. Another defense official noted, however, that ballistic missile attacks from the Houthis against Israel have decreased in the last week, and said the relentless US bombing campaign has made it more difficult for the Houthis to communicate and hit things accurately because they’ve been forced to “keep their heads down.”

The people briefed on the operation also all described the Houthi officials who have been killed in the US strikes as mid-level, akin to “middle management.” One exception is the Houthi official in charge of the group's drone operations, who was

killed in a strike last month, officials said.

National Security Adviser Mike Waltz referenced that Houthi leader in the Signal chat in March that was disclosed by The Atlantic. Waltz said in that chat that the Houthis’ “top missile guy” was killed when he walked into his girlfriend's building in Yemen which “collapsed” amid US strikes.

Two of the sources briefed on the ongoing operation said that comment is indicative of how the US military under Trump is taking a more “expansive” approach to the strikes than the Biden administration did, in terms of being less concerned about collateral damage. The Houthis have long used more populated areas to conceal command and control sites, the sources said.

But one of the defense officials said the building was not a civilian apartment building, but rather a meeting place for Houthi officials, and that the US military is using precision munitions and taking other measures to mitigate the risk of civilian casualties. The large-scale operation has also rattled some officials at US Indo-Pacific Command, who have complained in recent days and weeks about the large number of long-range weapons being expended by CENTCOM against the Houthis, particularly the JASSMs and Tomahawks, the sources said. Those weapons would be critical in the event of a war with China, and military planners at INDOPACOM are concerned that the CENTCOM operation could have a negative impact on US military readiness in the Pacific.

One of the defense officials also downplayed that concern, calling it “an exaggeration.”

“We employ precision munitions in every strike. We retain authority to use the full capacity of our deployed forces in the Middle East region against the Houthis,” the official said. “We have no concern about employment of long-range weapons when and if needed to maximize our effectiveness.”



SOUTH CAROLINA, UNITED STATES
03.26.2025
Courtesy Story
South Carolina National Guard

Columbia, S.C. - Today, the South Carolina Senate has officially confirmed U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Robin B. Stilwell as the state's next adjutant general, following his nomination by Governor Henry McMaster. Stilwell will succeed U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Van McCarty as leader of the South Carolina National Guard. As adjutant general, Stilwell will oversee the operations of the South Carolina Army and Air National Guard, the Emergency Management Division, the State Guard, and Youth ChalleNGe Academy. He has pledged to prioritize the well-being and success of the Military Department's personnel, citing their safety and effectiveness as his top responsibility.

Stilwell brings a wealth of experience to the role, having served in various capacities within the South Carolina National Guard, including as director of joint staff and deputy commanding general-reserve affairs at the U.S. Army War College. He has also deployed to Afghanistan, Kosovo, and Kuwait, earning numerous awards and decorations for his service.

"Brigadier General Stilwell's years of experience and proven leadership within the South Carolina National Guard have prepared him to take on this critical role," said Governor Henry McMaster. "I know that he



Photo By [Sgt. Ana-Grace Catoc](#) | U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Robin B. Stilwell is officially confirmed by the South Carolina Senate as the state's 30th adjutant general, following his nomination by Governor Henry McMaster, Columbia, South Carolina, March 26, 2025.

will continue to serve our state with honor and distinction, ensuring the Guard remains ready to protect South Carolinians and support our communities in times of need."

Stilwell has expressed gratitude for the opportunity to serve as adjutant general and has committed to working tirelessly on behalf of the state's military personnel and citizens. He will work closely with state leadership to ensure the continued success and effectiveness of the South Carolina National Guard.

The confirmation of Stilwell as adjutant general marks a new chapter in the South Carolina National Guard's leadership. He is poised to build on the strong foundation es-

tablished by his predecessor, Maj. Gen. Van McCarty.

"It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as the Adjutant General of the great state of South Carolina. We have been busy, but our Soldiers and Airmen kept one steady focus on their mission to do what they were asked to do and do it well," said Major General Van McCarty. "Under the leadership of Brig. Gen. Stilwell, I am confident the Soldiers, Airmen, and employees of the Military Department will continue to answer the call of our state and our nation."

At this time, a date has not been determined for the change of command ceremony.



VETERANS MEDICAL CARE—A STRENGTH OF BEAUFORT COUNTY

While the Veterans Administration has received a wide range of criticism over recent years, the quality of Veterans Affairs medical care appears to be well received and appreciated among the veteran community. According to NPR, survey results from last month showed that Veterans Affairs hospitals were ranked higher than private hospitals ten categories of patient satisfaction. The survey, known as HCAHPS (Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems) was a nationwide effort conducted through the Medicare system which rated both VA and private healthcare facilities on a variety of areas such as patient satisfaction, hospital cleanliness, and communication with medical staff. And before anyone disregards these results as a single data point, this recent survey is in line with multiple systematic reviews of VA health care by well-known medical institutions such as the Journal of General Internal Medicine and the Journal of the American College of Surgeons. The conclusions

throughout these sources are clear: VA health care is consistently as good or, sometimes, better than, non-VA care.

Given this information, Beaufort County is in an exceptionally fortunate place for veterans healthcare as the county is home to Naval Hospital Beaufort. Anyone driving over the McTeer Bridge or visiting the waterfronts of Port Royal has undoubtedly seen the huge hospital building rising among scenic groves of Spanish Moss trees, but it's easy to forget just how significant such a facility is. Naval Hospital Beaufort is one of only a handful of standalone VA or military hospitals not attached to a larger installation. Its location provides gives veteran residents of the Lowcountry their own dedicated place to receive a variety of medical care without the hassle of traveling to a more populated area such as Charleston or Savannah. The uniqueness of the facility is also a charming addition to the Beaufort area. The hospital building itself was built in 1949 on beautiful waterfront property in the shape of a Naval anchor and so lends a historic characteristic to the waterfront installation.

Of course, as many readers are no doubt aware,



there are plans in progress for Naval Hospital Beaufort's closure. If these plans are officially adopted, the installation will close entirely and consolidate its functions which will allow the Navy to both upgrade to new medical facilities and save on the upkeep required for the aging hospital building. But this does not mean that the benefits of the Hospital will leave Beaufort County. The Veterans Administration has already announced plans to build a new clinic in the immediate Beaufort area to replace its dedicated floor in the current hospital, and the Hospital's services to active duty Marines will be relocated to a new facility on MCAS Beaufort. Meanwhile, plans to redevelop the future vacant hospital site are in the works (check back in with this blog for an update on that soon!). Just as the military does not abandon its own, Naval Hospital Beaufort will continue to serve the Beaufort community in spirit, both in new clinic locations, and as a feature of the Port Royal Sound waterfront for many more years to come



South Carolina MOAA Member Supports Local Youth Programs



John Marcucci left high school to join the Marine Corps as a 10th grader. After stepping off the plane in San Diego in December 1958 for basic training, he never really slowed down — not even after a 33-year military career.

He retired from the military as a lieutenant colonel in 1992, settled in Columbia, S.C., and spent another 16 years working for the state while also throwing himself into a number of charitable and service organizations — which he continues to work with today at the age of 83.

“I needed to have something to do when I retired,” Marcucci said. “I didn’t want to be one of these guys who didn’t do anything and ended up dying too early.”

A couple of years before his military retirement, Marcucci had been initiated into the Masonry, the oldest fraternal organization in the world. By 1991, he was a Master Mason. When a fellow retired Marine friend invited Marcucci to a National Sojourners meeting,

he became a member soon after. The organization of Freemasons promotes patriotism and is made up of past and present servicemembers. That appealed to him. Not unlike Marines, “Masons take care of Masons,” Marcucci said, “and that was something I was interested in.”

By the late 1990s, he added service to the International Order of the Rainbow for Girls — a Masonic youth service organization — to his plate. When he learned its scholarship fund lacked support, Marcucci made a substantial donation and ultimately set up an endowment that has since awarded \$200,000. As a father and grandfather of boys, it was a nice change of pace to work with an all-girl youth group, he said.

Marcucci is also a long-time ROTC/JROTC coordinator for the Columbia Chapter of MOAA, supporting 99 high schools and colleges with ROTC/JROTC awards across South Carolina. He spends hours preparing award certificates and often presents them himself to students around the state. Marcucci also designed tow challenge coins that are fundraisers.



MOAA member Lt. Col. John Marcucci, USMC (Ret), left, has dedicated his time after a 33-year military career to local charitable and service organizations, including serving as the ROTC/Junior coordinator for the Columbia (S.C.) Chapter of MOAA. (Courtesy photo) *By Kristin Davis*

“It’s fun watching kids interact with each other,” Marcucci said. “They have fun together. They do everything together. That’s the way it should be.”

When Marcucci attends high school and college presentations, he dresses in full uniform that includes the Meritorious Service Medal with star and Navy Commendation Medal with Combat.

“The things I do now I want to do and I hope what I do pays back for the benefits in life I’ve had,” Marcucci said.

“Life’s been good for me, and I want it to be good for others.





Trivia you need to know

Why Did Sailors Wear Bell-Bottom Pants?

By Kristina Wright
History Facts
March 28, 2025

out that bell-bottom trousers have long been synonymous with sailors in the U.S. Navy: Just picture Sailor Jack, the patriotic mascot who first appeared on boxes of Cracker Jack in 1918, or Frank Sinatra and Gene Kelly dancing and singing in the 1945 musical *Anchors Aweigh*. During World War II, songwriter Moe Jaffe even reworked the lyrics of a bawdy 19th-century English sea shanty into “Bell Bottom Trousers,” a song about a woman’s love for her sailor, who wore “bell bottom trousers, coat of navy blue.”

The Navy first authorized wearing bell-bottom denim dungarees in 1901 as an alternative to heavier wool pants. With a few rare exceptions, bell-bottoms remained the official working uniform of enlisted sailors from 1913 through the 1990s. Some changes were made to the uniform over the years, and in the late 20th century pants with wide, straight legs replaced the flared bottoms, but they were still referred to as “bell-bottoms.” The classic image of the bell-bottom-wearing seaman lives on today — but why did sailors start wearing this style in the first place?



Before There Was a Navy Uniform, There Were Bell-Bottoms

It’s hard to pinpoint exactly why bell-bottoms became the clothing of choice for the U.S. Navy, but we do know the tradition started in the early 19th century, at a time when the Navy lacked a standardized uniform for enlisted personnel. By the mid-1800s, Britain’s Royal Navy had also adopted the flared-pant style, and by the end of the 19th century, other seafaring militaries had joined the bell-bottom bandwagon, too. One of the first descriptions of the attire of U.S. Navy enlisted sailors comes from an 1813 Navy file about the arrival of Commodore Stephen Decatur in New York, which describes “glazed canvas hats with stiff brims,

decked with streamers of ribbon, blue jackets buttoned loosely over waistcoats and blue trousers with bell bottoms.” One theory about the origin of these bell-bottoms is that before uniform regulations were established, Navy tailors may have been aiming to differentiate sailors’ dress from civilian clothing. But it turns users didn’t just serve a stylistic distinction — they were also a practical choice for sailors.

Wide-Leg Pants Were Safer and More Practical

In 1817, the secretary of the U.S. Navy issued regulations stating that sailors washing the decks of the ship should be barefoot and have their pants rolled up. The flared legs of bell-bottom

((Bell bottoms; continued on page 10))



(Bell bottoms; continued from page 9)



Credit: The Montifraulo Collection/ Hulton Archive via Getty Images

trousers made rolling them up easier compared to pants with narrower legs. Historic photographs from the early 20th century reflect how this tradition endured, clearly showing creases where the sailors' wide-legged pants had been rolled. But while naval folklore is filled with stories and speculation, there is no definitive answer for why bell-bottoms remained the sailors' uniform. One theory is that bell-bottom dungarees were a practical choice for the naval environment due to their durability and ease of wearing. The flared legs also provided better mobility, which was essential on a ship with confined spaces and many ladders.

There's also a widely held belief that bell-bottoms remained popular because of their potential use as a life preserver. Anyone who has ever fallen into a pool or lake while fully dressed knows how quickly wet clothes can become a burden. For a sailor swept overboard, heavy clothing wasn't just an inconvenience, it was a dangerous liability. The extra fabric on bell-bottom

pants made it easier to catch hold of a sail-or who went overboard and, once overboard, a sailor could take off their pants without removing their shoes (which they would need if they made it to the shoreline). There are also stories of sailors being taught in boot camp how to knot the wide pant legs of their bell-bottoms and inflate them with air, turning them into a flotation device, but there's no known evidence that the pants were ever used this way.

The "Monkey Suit" Became a Navy Tradition

We may never know exactly how or why bell-bottom pants became the enduring uniform for sailors, but they remain a tangible link to a bygone seafaring era. Over the years, the U.S. Navy has made minor modifications to the uniform, but it has remained virtually unchanged for two centuries. Despite efforts to balance tradition and practicality, attempts to change the classic look have typically been met with resistance.

In 1971, the Navy decided to phase out the traditional uniform worn by enlisted sailors, which included bell-bottom dungarees, in favor of straight trousers worn by officers and chief petty officers. It took four years to fully implement the change, and many sailors were not happy about losing the uniform that they fondly referred to as a "monkey suit."

In a 1971 interview with *The New York Times*, Navy sailor Henry Knapp aptly called the look a "tradition and trademark." Sailors also complained that the officer-style uniforms were difficult to keep clean and took up too much space in their ship-board storage. In 1977, the chief of naval operations decided to reverse the previous guideline and reauthorized the traditional uniform for the four lowest enlisted ranks.

In 1999, the Navy once again began phasing out the bell-bottom dungarees in favor of straight-legged pants, despite sailors' complaints that the change would result in a loss of their distinctive look. Steeped in nautical nostalgia, bell-bottoms were a symbol of pride, and their flared legs created a unique silhouette that set sailors apart from other branches of the U.S. military. Bell-bottoms may never again be a mandatory item in a sailor's sea bag, but this iconic piece of clothing will always have a place in naval history.



Credit: Universal History Archive/ Universal Images Group via Getty Images

unlike y'all I only get my news from reliable sources



WELCOME TO THE LOWCOUNTRY MOAA CHAPTER



To sustain and expand the excellence of LCMOAA, and to advertise our chapters activities, we need more members to ***step up to help*** us on the Board. Most importantly, to participate in the selection of future topics, the identification of speakers, to serve on the LCMOAA BOD or committee and recruitment of new members.

We need ***increased participation from the membership*** to build upon Chapter momentum and potential. Areas to serve include USO representatives, assistant committee positions (legislative, personal affairs, event project officer, communications, Quartermaster.....)

Please contact President Fred Channels at (540) 226-2001 or oldfred44@hotmail.com to inquire about the opportunities to share some

of the load and make our Chapter all it can be.

Never Stop Serving



TAPS

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ALERT

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